

Historic Building Appraisal

Po Lin Shut – Annex Block

Lower Keung Shan, Lantau

Many Buddhist temples and retreat homes were erected in Keung Shan of Lantau Island in the early 20th century. Po Lin Shut (寶蓮室) in Lower Keung Shan (下羌山) was founded in 1916 by a Buddhist monk, Master Ba Si (八寺長老, 1876-1949) and a female Jushi De Shui (德水居士). Master Ba Si originally practiced at Ding Hu Shan (鼎湖山) in Guangdong (廣東) province, a famous Buddhist mountain. De Shui was his relative. After the death of Master Ba Si in 1949 at the age of 73, the monastery became a nunnery exclusively for female Buddhist followers. Under the leadership of Sik Shang-ru (釋勝如, 1892-1967), its service was expanded. More than 15 nuns resided at the Shut in the late 1950s with many devotees came to study Buddhist sutras there.

*Historical
Interest*

Sik Wai-yin (釋慧賢, 1933-2000) became the third abbess of the Shut until her death in 2000. She was succeeded by her three disciples, Sik Chi-ling (釋智寧), Sik Chi-woo (釋智和) and Sik Chi-yung (釋智容). The former two are in elderly home because of health problem whilst Chi-yung is working and staying at Po Lin Monastery (寶蓮禪寺). Chow Kim-pui (周金培), a nephew of Sik Wai-yin, is responsible of the matters of the nunnery which is left vacated. Mother Sik Ding-moon (釋定滿), keeper of Chi Chuk Lam Nunnery (紫竹林) also in Lower Keung Shan, takes care of the nunnery as well.

Po Lin Shut is constructed on a levelled terrace which access is through a flight of long staircases and footpath. At the entrance of the compound is a two-column gate constructed of concrete with a couplet written on it. Po Lin Shut began with a single building with the construction of two more in 1957 and in the 1970s.

*Architectural
Merit*

This **Annex Block** was added in the **1970s** to the right of the main building. It is a two-storey Chinese vernacular building constructed of concrete and stones with its walls to support its pitched roof. The building taller than the main building was for residential use of the nuns with an entrance on the ground floor. The walls are plastered and painted with earth yellow colour. The floors are with ceramic tiles.

Together with other nunneries in Lower Keung Shan, Ng Chun Nunnery (悟真, erected in 1927), Chi Chuk Lam (erected in 1918), and Ling Yan Monastery (靈隱寺, erected in 1928), it is one of the Buddhist establishments to remind the development of Buddhism in the area.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

Its authenticity is basically kept.

Authenticity

The nunnery though called Po Lin has no relationship with the well known Po Lin Monastery (寶蓮禪寺) at Ngong Ping (昂平) of Lantau erected in 1928. Monk Fa Ke (筏可法師), the second abbot of the monastery in 1930-1972, had close contact with the nunnery. Four characters '寶樹蓮宗' at the entrance gate of the nunnery were written by him.

***Social Value,
& Local
Interest***

Po Lin Shut is a Buddhist nunnery of Chinese vernacular style with local adaptations that reflects the old building construction customs on Lantau at that time. It is a typical part of Lantau's past culture. A number of buildings of similar designs remain in the surroundings. It blends nicely with the remote rural environment that is full of trees. Ng Chun and Chi Chuk Lam are the other religious historic buildings neighbouring Po Lin Shut. Sik Chi-ling (釋智寧), Sik Chi-woo (釋智和) and Sik Chi-yung (釋智容), Po Lin Shut's present tenants have close relationship with Ng Chit and Wai Sau Monastery in Luk Wu.

Group Value

It is considered that the question of adaptive re-use does not arise at the present time.

***Adaptive
Re-use***